United Nations S/2003/1191

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 December 2003

Original: English

Letter dated 17 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 16 December 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Somali national reconciliation process (see annex). I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marcello **Spatafora**
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 17 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 16 December 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Somali national reconciliation process

The European Union welcomes the decision of the International Authority on Development (IGAD) Facilitation Committee to convene a retreat of Somali leaders in Kenya in order to prepare the third and final phase of the Conference. It urges all Somali leaders party to the reconciliation process to participate constructively in the leaders meeting to bridge their differences and to reach an agreement on a viable government and a durable solution to the conflict in Somalia.

The European Union also welcomes the strong commitment to peace in Somalia of African leaders participating in the retreat, namely President Kibaki of Kenya, hosting the Conference, President Chissano of Mozambique, in his capacity of President of the African Union, President Museveni of Uganda, as IGAD Chairman, and Mr. Konare, President of the Commission of the African Union.

The European Union is convinced that any outcome of the national reconciliation conference which is not based on a broad-based and inclusive approach would risk aggravating the situation in Somalia and fuel new and more violent conflicts in the country. It therefore strongly urges all Somali leaders who have been unable to return to Kenya to do so without delay with a view to achieving a political settlement for the good of the Somali people.

The European Union commends the efforts of IGAD and its member States to provide new impetus to the peace negotiation, and reiterates its full and continuing support for the IGAD-sponsored national reconciliation process, which is the only sure path towards the restoration of effective government, peace and stability in Somalia.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.